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THE ACTIVITIES OF DELINQUENT BOYS

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The problem that presents itself to an industrial school such as the Lyman School for Boys is to receive delinquent and morally defective boys under fifteen years of age with a minority commitment for the purpose of making law-abiding and self-supporting citizens of them. Where a boy comes from the courts as clearly a delinquent, his delinquency is the result of the environment in which he has lived. His ideas of right and wrong have been perverted by home and social conditions. If a boy is a moral defective through his heredity, the problem is made still more complex and difficult. If to one or more of these traits—delinquency and moral defect—is added feeble-mindedness, the problem is made still more complex and often hopeless. The classification of these boys is considerable of a problem. To aid in this work we have the services of specialists and a hearty and valuable cooperation on the part of the physicians of various state institutions.

Physical Development

When a boy comes to school he is a subject for individual thought and study from the time of his entrance. He is subjected to an examination by the physician and dentist. If physical difficulties are discovered steps are taken to remedy them, even if it is necessary to enlist the services of the Massachusetts General Hospital and the Massachusetts Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary. These institutions have been of great assistance in aiding us to bear our responsibilities beyond what our own hospital can meet.

Each boy receives a thorough examination of his teeth by the dentist when he comes and another examination when he leaves. Dental treatment is also given whenever conditions demand it. Where there is defective vision, treatment is prescribed by an oculist.

Besides the different treatments for bodily defects, the physical development is aided by play upon the playground connected with each cottage and by work under the physical director in the gymna-

sium. Drills in physical culture, swimming in the pool and military drill are indulged in by each boy twice or more times a week. At the proper season, under the same director, school teams are organized in baseball, football and basket-ball. These teams frequently compete with other school teams, both at the school and away from it. Also, cottage leagues are organized in these different games, in which a team from each cottage contests.

Family and Industrial Life

The boys are domiciled in twelve cottages, having from sixteen to thirty-five boys in a cottage. Each cottage is made as homelike and sanitary as possible through the efforts of the master and matron and the boys. Certain boys—six or seven—are detailed to the matron for doing housework, outside of the cooking, which is done in the general kitchen. While this work may seem somewhat poorly adapted to boys, it proves to be a valuable training in habits of neatness, promptness in work, ability to assume responsibility, withstanding temptation and pride in work well done.

Further than the domestic duties, many of the boys are engaged in different departments of agriculture, horticulture and floriculture, certain cottages being assigned to specific lines of work. To furnish general employment and instruction in these lines of work we have the farm, a dairy of sixty cows, a creamery, a small acreage of small fruits and apple orchard, the general and cottage lawns, the hennery and flower gardens. At the Berlin Cottage, to which the boys under thirteen are assigned, their occupation outside of school and play time is devoted either to housework or to some kind of farm work.

Besides the more general outside work there are certain kinds of work to which special boys are detailed. The shoe shop has tools and machinery with which all shoes for the boys are made and repaired. The tailor shop, equipped with motor-driven machines, makes and repairs a large portion of the boys' wearing apparel. Recently a class in masonry constructed about five hundred feet of subway, besides doing considerable concrete and brick work. In the bakery and general kitchen are done the baking and cooking for all the boys and a large portion of that for the officers. A well equipped laundry does the laundering for the school. The engineering, plumbing and electrical department has employed boys in the boiler room, in the repairing of electrical appliances, in the piping of the five hun-

dred feet of subway and in installing the radiation in the double cottage and keeping up the numerous plumbing repairs. Boys are employed by the storekeeper in the storeroom in receiving and disbursing the supplies. An up-to-date printing office puts forth all of the printing supplies besides issuing two local periodicals. The carpenter and cabinet shop does the carpentry work and makes all of the furniture for the school. Besides this it does the repair work upon the buildings. During a recent summer and fall one thousand three hundred feet of water mains and one thousand feet of sewer and drain pipes were laid with the labor of the boys. The excavations for this and for the five hundred feet of subway were dug by them mainly during the summer intermission of the school.

Besides the general occupations mentioned above we aim to have each boy have a course either in sloyd or lathe and forge work. These are courses that are aimed to acquaint the boys with elementary ideas of the uses of tools and machinery. The boys take to it with enthusiasm, and develop very rapidly in muscular, mental and moral control. While the work does not aim at a specific trade, it does aim to prepare a boy for taking up a special vocation in the future. These courses are modified in one class in such a way as to make them valuable to our backward boys. We have recently endeavored more strongly to correlate the trade work with the school work. The trade classes that are working under this system are those of carpentry, plumbing, masonry, electrical work, printing and dairying. The afternoon classes in each of these trades are divided into two divisions, each division attending the school alternate weeks. The instruction, especially in mathematics, language, drawing and geography is adjusted to the trade that each boy is learning. In this way more boys get the advantages of the school and of the trades. So far as can be observed through a hearty cooperation of the school and trade instructors, an increased interest seems to be aroused on the part of the boys in both their trade and academic work. It is an endeavor to mix the theory and the practice of trade teaching in the right proportion.

In spite of the material received our school of letters is doing a good work. Our grading is different from that in the public schools because the pupils are more nearly of an age. The difference in advancement between the consecutive grades is of such a small degree that frequent individual promotions can advantageously be made

from a lower to a higher class. A boy is moved forward as rapidly as his individual work will allow. The curriculum is aimed to include those things which will be of most service to him. Many of our boys do not pursue school studies further after leaving us. As strong adjuncts to our school we have departments in music and drawing which are a means of helpfulness. At the Berlin Cottage we maintain an ungraded school, which keeps the small boys in preparation to take up their regular school work when they are boarded out.

Moral and Religious Instruction

To surround the boy with a wholesome atmosphere in the cottage and with a sincere religious life is essential. As near as the number of boys in a cottage will allow, it is aimed to have the family idea prevail. Where there is too large a number this idea falls short to a certain degree. Each cottage is provided with games, periodicals and a library that are available in the reading rooms. The two cottages recently constructed aid us in reducing the census of each family.

The religious life of the institution remains a prominent feature of the training. Recently a change has been made in the matter of conducting our religious instruction and services. For some years previous it was customary for boys of all faiths except the Hebrew to go to the village of Westboro for religious worship. Owing to the fact that our boys made up such a large part of the congregation and caused crowded conditions in some of the churches of the village, it was deemed advisable to hold religious exercises at the school. For this purpose \$1,100 was appropriated. Each boy now can attend services of his own creed at the school on Sunday. Besides this each boy is given lessons in his Sunday school class and instruction quite generally in a week-day evening group by the pastor of his own denomination. This change has worked well and on the whole I believe that the boys now have more efficient religious instruction than they have heretofore enjoyed. To instill ideas of reverence for our country and its great men, special programmes of commemoration are arranged from time to time in the school building. These have added much pleasure and interest.

Sometimes a boy may not be located in the right cottage surroundings, due to the influence of particularly unfortunate companionships formed or to the temperament of the officers in that cottage.

To remedy this, more frequent transfers are made from one cottage to another. Officers have their individual temperaments, as well as the boys. It is found that each officer is better adapted to one class of boys than to another. The transfer of a boy from one officer to another is not necessarily a discredit to the officer from whom the transfer is made. There are cases where the transfers work both ways. We make every endeavor possible to place the boy in the environment that will produce the best results, just as a horticulturist places plants in a soil and atmosphere most conducive to their growth.

Disciplinary Matters

The question of discipline will ever remain with us as long as there are delinquent boys. The past two years have witnessed considerable change in our methods of handling those cases of misconduct against the rules of the social community of our school. So far as possible we are endeavoring to make our methods of handling these matters similar to those of the open community. A spirit of public sentiment favoring that which is right and condemning that which is wrong is developed to a considerable degree among the boys. The fact that a thing is condemned by the majority is often a strong incentive to improve conduct. So far as possible we aim to have good conduct rewarded with the highest privileges. The cottage group having the highest average in deportment for any given month in school is rewarded with some additional pleasures some evening. For more serious offenses the disciplinary cottage and corporal punishments are resorted to. During the early part of the previous year a disciplinary cottage was established. To this boys are committed for various offenses under an indeterminate commitment, a minimum time always being designated. Just how much longer the boy remains is determined by his conduct. At the disciplinary cottage the boy is denied all intercourse with the other boys of the school, and the more difficult and heavier work is required of him. The diet is wholesome and plain, but not so varied as that of the other boys. He is also given plenty of active physical exercise through calisthenics and military drill. The boy earns no credits while at the disciplinary cottage. Day and night supervision is exercised. In cases where it seems best corporal punishment is administered under the direction of the superintendent or his assistant. By the use of

the disciplinary cottage we have done away with the detention rooms and about two-thirds of our corporal punishments.

Any plan of dealing with boys that does not take into consideration the dynamic feature of the boy's growth in its fourfold relations—physical, mental, spiritual and social—is sure to meet with failure. Each boy has certain possibilities of manhood existing within him. To realize these possibilities is the aim of all work with boys, whether it be in the home, the boy's club, the church, the school or the institution. Each delinquent boy received at any industrial school has certain possibilities within him. He is just as much entitled to their proper development as is the normal boy. This can be said, notwithstanding the fact that he may be "born short" through heredity. In many cases, probably seventy-five per cent of those dealt with, the boy's delinquency is a result of living in a congested district, where he has had no chance to be a natural boy without breaking the law. Each delinquent has been an unsolved problem to the social organizations with which he has come in contact. No two boys come with the same inherent qualities. Each one shows marked individual traits. While the members of a group of boys possess many qualities in common, in the last analysis the individual must be dealt with. As Dr. Burr states, "individual work takes time and strength and money, and we have not yet realized its importance in both religious and educational work sufficiently to pay the price."